

News from the Board

Reflections on our 27 June Board meeting - Anna Bradley

29 June 2023

We had an extra Board meeting in June so that we could discuss the feedback from our three-year strategy and business plan consultation and approve the SRA budget requirement for 2024. It was good to hear about the wide range of engagement already undertaken, the issues people were most interested in, and the support for particular proposals, for example, more work on innovation and technology. We will of course publish all the details in due course.

While the one-year business plan consultation has closed - so that we can conclude the process for setting fees for next year - the strategy discussions continue until 2 August, so please do get involved in the ongoing consultation events and give us your feedback on our longer-term plans.

Meanwhile, the Board approved the proposed increase in our budget of 11 per cent. They noted that when set in the context of the individual practising certificate fee (which covers not just us, but also The Law Society, the Legal Services Board and the Ombudsman among others), our proportion will increase by seven per cent. As we explained in the consultation, we have absorbed inflation over many years alongside making significant investments in efficiency and effectiveness, and taking on additional work such as anti-money laundering and sanctions.

We took advantage of this extra meeting to take the annual report of our own Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO). We heard that we had submitted 24 money laundering related suspicious activity reports (SARs) involving more than £75m. We were very pleased to hear that our relationship with the National Crime Agency (NCA) was strong. We had had some positive feedback on our approach to reporting and had worked closely with the NCA on its new reporting system.

As a result, we were the first organisation to register and submit SARs on their new platform. More widely, we heard how our MLRO offers leadership and guidance to others on the role of the MLRO. We thanked our MLRO for her collaborative and expert approach to this important area of our work.

Finally, we had a helpful update on our investments from Cazenove, our investment manager. The last year has obviously been a difficult one for all investors, so we were pleased to see Cazenove had kept pace with other investment approaches. We are committed to a sustainable and

responsible approach to our investment and our portfolio now reflects that. We discussed more of the detail of Cazenove's approach to responsible investment and will be covering this in our annual financial reporting.

The night before this meeting we had an excellent dinner discussion with members of the House of Lords and our own Board members were buzzing with ideas as a result. So we are very much looking forward to our next full Board in mid-July, when we will meet with a wide range of stakeholders in Newcastle.